

Message Text

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60

ACTION H-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 NEA-07 ISO-00 SS-07 NSC-06 AID-01 IO-03

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R 111511Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3743
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP, PFOR, ENRG, IS

SUBJECT: CODEL RIBICOFF/BAKER VISIT TO ISRAEL

1. CODEL RIBICOFF/BAKER VISITED ISRAEL NOVEMBER 7-11. THERE WAS GREAT MEDIA INTEREST IN THEIR VISIT BECAUSE IT WAS THE FIRST FOLLOWING THE U.S. ELECTION AND BECAUSE IT WAS KNOWN THAT THE CODEL INTENDED TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR ENERGY. THE DELEGATION HAD LONG AND INFORMATIVE SESSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER AND A SHORTER MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE. IT ALSO MET WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER GOLDA MEIR AND WITH A GROUP FROM THE KNESSET. AEMINAR WITH THE CODEL WAS DEVOTED TO CURRENT MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS AND ANOTHER TO ISRAEL'S ENERGY SITUATION AND PROSPECTS. THE CODEL ALSO VISITED THE GOLAN HEIGHTS.

2. PRIME MINISTER RABIN REVIEWED CURRENT MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS AND ISRAEL'S HOPES FOR THE FUTURE ALONG FAMILIAR LINES AND RESPONDED TO THE CODEL'S QUESTIONS. HE SAID HE EXPECTED U.S. MOVES TOWARD NEGOTIATIONS IN 1977 AND THAT HE WOULD WELCOME THESE MOVES BECOMING A PART OF ISRAEL'S ELECTION ISSUES. ON NUCLEAR ENERGY RABIN PROFESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT NON-PROLIFERATION BUT SHOWED NO INCLINATION TO SIGN THE NPT AND LITTLE REGARD FOR THE IAEA (SEE TEL CONFIDENTIAL

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AVIV 7588).

3. IN HIS MEETING WITH THE CODEL, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON ALSO INDICATED ISRAELI DISTRUST OF THE IAEA AND DISINCLINATION TO SIGN THE NPT, ALTHOUGH HE CLAIMED THAT GOI WOULD SUPPORT A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE STRESSED THE STRATEGIC CONTRIBUTION ISRAEL MAKES TO STABILITY IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. AS DID RABIN, HE SAID ISRAEL IS ANXIOUS TO SEE MOMENTUM RESUMED TOWARD PEACE NEGOTIATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST (SEE THE AVIV 7616).

4. IN RESPONDING TO SENATORS' QUESTIONS, MINISTER OF DEFENSE PERES SAID ISRAEL IS EXTENDING ALL POSSIBLE AID TO FRIENDLY VILLAGES IN SOUTH LEBANON WITHOUT COMMITTING ISRAELI TROOPS. REGARDING HIS COMPETITION WITH RABIN, PERES INDICATED HE IS KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN AS THE LABOR PARTY PREPARES FOR ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN FEBRUARY. ON NUCLEAR MATTERS, HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS COULD NOT PROVIDE ANY ANSWER TO MIDDLE EAST CONFLICTS, THAT THE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS BY ISRAEL WOULD BE A TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY, AND THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY WITH U.S. ASSISTANCE TO EGYPT TO BUILD A NUCLEAR POWER STATION (SEPTEL).

5. THE SEMINAR HELD BY A NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST GAVE THE CODEL AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR NON-GOVERNMENTAL VIEWS ON THE AREA AND ON ISRAEL'S POLICIES. THE SESSION WITH KNESSET MEMBERS WAS USED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS PUT BY THEM TO THE SENATORS OVER A WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS. THE MEETING WITH MRS. MEIR WAS PRIMARILY A SOCIAL OCCASION. THE PRESENCE OF WIVES AT ALL BRIEFINGS APPEARED TO INHIBIT THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS VERY LITTLE.

6. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE VISIT WAS EXTENSIVE WITH FULL TELEVISION AND PRESS REPORTS EACH DAY. THE CODEL HELD A WELL ATTENDED PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE FINAL DAY OF ITS VISIT. THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS SENATOR RIBICOFF'S SUGGESTION REGARDING AN APPOINTMENT AS SPECIAL ENVOY FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER (SEE TEL AVIV 7654). CODEL MEMBERS AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE PLAYED DOWN PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE GOI REFUSAL OF OUR REQUEST TO VISIT THE DIMONA NUCLEAR

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FACILITY WAS A MAJOR INCIDENT.
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CODELS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV07675
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760421-0526
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761156/aaaabwom.tel
Line Count: 109
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION H
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 NOV 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL RIBICOFF/BAKER VISIT TO ISRAEL
TAGS: OREP, PFOR, ENRG, IS, US, (BAKER, HOWARD H JR), (RIBICOFF, ABRAHAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006